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with Juli Kight

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Chinese Herbs and Healing Arts 1

Dateline: 03/20/99

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History / Introduction

The history of Chinese herb use is the oldest method of the Chinese health system evolving slowly over thousands of years. It is believed to date back 5000 years when ancient Chinese shamans used herbs for religious and health ceremonies. The first written documentation dates back 2700 BC, The Yellow Emperors Inner Classic which was a discussion of health between the Yellow Emperor and his doctor.

Legendary Shen Nong, wrote The Classic of Materia Medica. This text was written on the trial and error experimentation of 365 substances. Shen Nong took all these substances himself, observed and documented the effects. Taoist Tao Hong Jing, added another 365 substances and edited the work to include classifications.

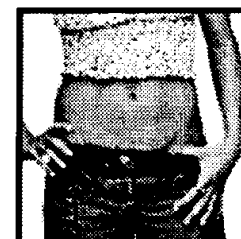
By 1618 AD, the first official Materia Medica was created with about 1800 substances listed. By the 20th century it lists herbs from all over the world. It is still be updated today to include scientific data, uses, functions and uses with acupuncture.

During the 1900's, modern medicine was being forced into the Chinese culture. Many fought the



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forced into the Chinese culture. Many fought the idea and still kept their faith in their traditional health systems. I have not found a lot of information on the Internet about this time period, but it appears to me that they have found a way to utilize faster modern medicine to diagnose first, then treat and correct using their traditional methods.

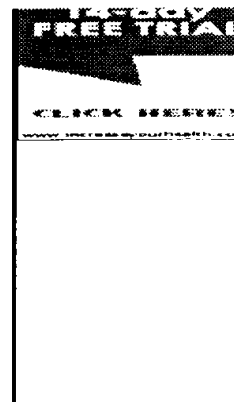
It is almost impossible to try to learn about Chinese herbs and using them correctly without learning about the basic health philosophy as a whole. Chinese medicine is based on the body as a whole and it's condition at the time of diagnosis. Herbalism may be the oldest portion of the Chinese health system, but it is a synergistic combination with many other practices such as acupuncture, exercise and meditation, diet and lifestyle. It is also a very intricate part on its own. Chinese herbs are used on energetic evaluations verses symptomatically like we do here in the west. I like the way Lesley Tierra states it in *The Nature of Herbal Healing*. "The herb's energies are matched with that of the person, the disease and its cause. Thus rather than making the headache the main treatment focus, we look at the person to see what is occurring in the body to cause the headache." I highly recommend this book if you are interested in Eastern herbalism because it is easy for the beginner to understand and it is blended with our Western herbal practices. We will look at this philosophy closer in the next Chinese Herbs feature.

Over the next few months, I will be featuring a number of in-depth articles on Chinese herbs and healing arts. We will look at the foundation philosophies, energy and chi, classifications, specific herbs and patent formulas. If you are experienced in this area and would like to contribute an article or information please E-mail me!

Be sure to watch for the next feature - Chinese Herbalism - Healing Philosophy.

Information Resources and Links

Tierra, Lesley, L. Ac., [The Herbs of Life: Health & Healing Using Western & Chinese Techniques](#);



The Crossing Press, 1997
Chinese Herbology - Good chronological account.
Herbal Article - About Traditional Chinese Medicine
The History of Acupuncture in China-HealthWorld Online
RMHI | A history of herbology and herbalism: oppressed arts
Books and Journals - Good descriptions of Materia Medica, formularies and historical records.

Resources and Information

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Please feel free to contact me if you have any suggestions, questions or comments. You are also invited to fill out the site survey under the "Feedback" link. Your feedback is important!
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